Climate Change and Anthropocene: Reading Environmental Catastrophe in Select Fictions from South Asia

PhD Synopsis

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This research proposes thematic and theoretical study of select South-Asian fictions dealing with the theme of climate change and ecological catastrophe, a fast emerging arena of analysis in the twenty-first century literary spectrum. A greater focus on the topic of climate change has emerged in literary studies as an outcome of the growing trend of climate fiction, also known as "cli-fi". In the twenty-first century, an increasing number of critical analyses on climate change literature, specifically novels, are assisting in the formation of a genre of climate change fiction. Freelance writer and journalist Dan Bloom's contribution in coining and the development of the term 'cli-fi' is much acclaimed. Disastrous effects of global climate change have been reflected in the works of the prominent authors like Margaret Atwood, Lydia Millet, Paolo Bacigalupi, Nathaniel Rich, T. C. Boyle, Ian McEwan, Amitav Ghosh, Michael Crichton, Leslie Marmon Silko, Barbara Kingsolver, Marcel Theroux and many others. They have dealt with the portrayal of a sombre future of a changed world fighting against the apocalyptic non-human forces like global warming, sea-level rise, frequent occurrences of storms, flood, drought etc. Cli-fi writer Margaret Atwood (2013) stated:

> "There's a new term, cli-fi (for climate fiction, a play on sci-fi), that's being used to describe books in which an altered climate is part of the plot. Dystopic novels used to concentrate only on hideous political regimes, as in George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Now, however, they're more likely to take place in a challenging landscape that no longer resembles the hospitable planet we've taken for granted. Whether fictional or factual, the coming decades don't sound like a picnic. It's a scary scenario, and we're largely unprepared" (Atwood).

After entering the Anthropocene, humans are considered to be the dominant species capable enough to alter the future of the planet. Human activities are affecting the environment and the climate to a great extent leading to species extinction and massive exhaustion of resources. The concept of the Anthropocene serves as a sombre reminder of human responsibilities in the face of anthropogenic climate change and the ensuing ecological disaster. According to Trexler and Johns-Putra (2011), as the concern about the long term impacts of climate change has expanded from a restricted scientific and ecological cynosure to broader social, political and cultural domains, climate change fiction has also expanded

from the sub-genre of science fiction to a broader range of literary forms. Climate change is no longer an exclusively scientific issue and is therefore no longer the exclusive arena dominated by genres popularly classified as science fiction, post-apocalyptic fiction or dystopian fiction.

My thesis intends to examine how South Asian fiction about climate change explores the complexity of the issue as scientific, cultural and cognitive phenomena and employs innovations in narrative techniques and characterization that voice a call for imaginative and cultural rethinking. Amitav Ghosh in *The Great Derangement* (2016) states "we have entered a time when the wild has become the norm: if certain literary forms are unable to negotiate these torrents, then they have failed- and their failures will have to be counted as an aspect of the broader imaginative and cultural failure that lies at the heart of the climate crisis" (Ghosh 10). The study thus pays attention to the manifestations of climate catastrophe in select South Asian novels by the authors like Amitav Ghosh, Romesh Gunesekera, Arif Anwar, Uzma Aslam Khan, Minoli Salgado, Arundhati Roy etc. with a hope that thorough analysis of their works will lead to a greater understanding of climate change and thus contribute to more dynamic South Asian climate change discourses. Through this thesis I intend to delineate how the efforts of certain South Asian novelists have brought forth distinctive variety of fictions and current hybrid realisms that fall under the cli-fi category.

The study seeks to analyse certain stories, especially those seemingly skeptic of portraying universal crisis, through the lens of climatology. In his novel *Gun Island* (2019), Amitav Ghosh depicts the role played by displacement and dislocation of a cast of characters as disaster-driven migrants struggling to adapt to an entirely new society and culture. The novel meets many representational challenges postulated by ecological strifes such as dead-zones in ocean, sea-level rise, cyclonic storms and disastrous wildfire. An analysis of Ghosh's another novel *The Hungry Tide* (2004) reveals how a fictional work can be both an account of the Marichjhapi massacre and an entreaty to protect the environment of the planet. The unpredictable nature of the islands of Sundarbans, where mangrove forests appear and disappear, perilously expose both human and non-human inhabitants to rising sea levels, deluge, land erosion, and increased severity of cyclones.

In Romesh Gunesekera's *Reef* (1994), Mister Salgado, a Sinhalese marine biologist, looks into the pace with which Sri Lankan reefs are bleaching and coastlines are eroding. He forecasts the complete destruction of the reefs that line the coasts of Sri Lanka, which will inevitably lead to the island being submerged. Arif Anwar's *The Storm* (2018) vividly

portrays the experiences of people preparing to face the worst kind of storm about to descend on Bangladesh. This 1970 Bhola Cyclone killed a large number of people and the aftermath of this catastrophic event is felt in the region even today. The natural disasters that hit Bangladesh every year can be understood from the account given by Shahryar in the novel: "Our country has a love-hate relationship with water. Bangladesh is flat, just a few meters above sea level, and we have all these incredibly wide, long rivers that dive towards our country from the springboard of the Himalayas, bringing the rich alluvial soil that makes Bangladesh so fertile that it can sustain a hundred million people, the same rivers that flood every summer with the monsoon rains and displace millions. But the storms are much worse in terms of death tolls. They lash our southern coast every year. The damage is unthinkable sometimes. The storm in November 1970 killed a half million people overnight because no one was warned" (Anwar 162). Uzma Aslam Khan's *Trespassing* (2003) describes the anthropogenic human invasion of spaces owned by non-human species which can be considered as a menace to non-human habitations. The novel also tries to draw the readers' attention to industrial corporations' encroachment on the habitats of indigenous Indus Valley fishermen, resulting in polluted and fissured landscapes. The novel provides important insight into how the corporations, with their power of technology and capital, have trespassed the boundaries of business and come to control the sea. The author grieves over the lost grandeur of the Indus Valley which has diminished into a deserted and arid landscape. Minoli Salgado's *A Little Dust on the Eyes* (2014) is a haunting account about the Boxing Day Tsunami that hit Sri Lanka in the year 2004. The inevitable tragic consequence of the tsunami changes the course of the future of two cousins Savi and Renu. The novels mentioned above depict the environmental and socio-cultural aspects of the interaction between climate change and humanity.

Many of the South Asian novels deal with the theme of climate change along with a specific focus on the development of the plot, character and setting without being too frivolous or lacking in specificity. Fiction uniquely offers the opportunity for the authors and readers to engage in a speculative simulation of a disaster-stricken region or its possible future, whilst the act of reading simultaneously suggests the mutual creation of that perilous scenario. The study has been taken up with the assumption that a critical analysis of the representation of climate driven catastrophe in fiction of South Asian countries will generate a unique connotation because of their significant geographical location, biodiversity and fast transforming climate. In the present era of drastic environmental alteration, "we are confronted suddenly with a new task: that of finding other ways in which to imagine the

unthinkable beings and events of this era" (Ghosh 44). The scope of the thesis is narrowed by its focus on the representation of socio-cultural and psychological legibility of climate issues in balancing the demands imposed by universal crisis whilst also taking into account the specific attributes of the local and the global manifestation of climate crisis.

In the wake of global warming, climate change is no longer regarded merely as an environmental issue, rather as a challenge to radically reshape global societies. Interaction between climate, humans, and ecosystem are the most crucial issue today. It's significant because it demonstrates the wide-ranging implications and threats of climate change on nation-states. Environmental catastrophe caused by climate change also affects country economies, agriculture and infrastructure. For countries to better deal with climate change's effects, the Paris Agreement, which was adopted in 2015, established a system of appropriate financial distributions, new technological frameworks, and improved frameworks for building national capacity. Syed Mahdi (2019) has stated "Climate Change and its extremes are increasingly one of the most serious national security threats, which will have significant impacts on agriculture, natural resources, ecosystem and biodiversity. At the same time, it is likely to trigger food insecurity, human migration, economic and social depression, environmental and political crisis, thereby affecting national development" (Mahdi ix). Contemporary fictions on climate change are important for a nation to cater awareness as such issues, mainly have severe effects on the lives of poor and marginalised people who are deeply associated with nature through cultivation of land. Every country should consider it as a major threat leading to more unprecedented devastations. It also shows that some of the South Asian countries like India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka are prone to vulnerabilities due to the increasing number of climate related catastrophe. Loss of life, personal hardships and existential threats are some of the major troubles while considering the effects of climate disasters in developing countries. Massive shifts in Earth's temperature and physical composition cause an abrupt reorganization of the environment, affecting the lives of countless people and altering the course of history by putting the national authorities to the test. According to Ulrich Beck (1992), natural hazards are not only the problem of a particular place and its adjoining areas, but also –"in their origins and through their consequences - are thoroughly social problems, problems of people, their history, their living conditions, their relation to the world and reality, their social, cultural and political situations" (Beck 81). Following the shock of the disaster, a sense of regeneration emerges, paving the way for new transnational activities to rebuild the wreckage of the "risk community". As outlined in Naomi Klein's *The Shock Doctrine* (2007), "free market" policies have emerged

to control and dominate the world. Klein meticulously investigates how 'neoliberal' economic policies have been forced through following 'shocks' – generally wars, natural catastrophe or coercive state apparatuses. So why do elites need to execute these policies when there is a crisis? Klein believes that these policies act against the profit of the majority or the common people because they transfer money and authority to the global corporate elite. Following shocks, the neoliberal agenda has been pushed through in various nations. Most importantly, neo-liberals require opportunity of 'shock' or crisis in order to introduce policies like privatisation, deregulation and cutbacks in public expenditure because the major portion of people would not welcome such policies as they would result in a shift of money and authority to corporate elites from which capitalism will benefit from disaster. In the novel *A Little Dust on the Eyes* by Minoli Salgado, there are examples of high activity on the coastal road where the 'silence' is interrupted and the loud cry of billboards claim "redevelopment schemes". The 'reconstruction' was nothing less than the purposeful destruction of the local people's culture and snatching their lands. The entire construction would result in "victimizing the victims, exploiting the exploited" (Klein 389). They saw it as an opportunity to "build a model nation" that would implement "disaster capitalism".

Fictions on climate migration and refugee crisis are gaining popularity not only because of their distinct style, but due to their socio-cultural relevance. The subject is relevant because human mobility of today's world responds to multiple factors including socio-political and economic conditions, demographic and cultural remodeling, and natural or environmental changes among others. Migration trend from South Asian countries is predicted to be intensified in the years to come owing to the political, social, economical and environmental crises. Amitav Ghosh's novels in question deal with distinct representational and theoretical challenges, as they incorporate narratives of dislocation and refugeehood that humanize real life experiences of the climate refugees. These stories focus on internal and/or transnational migration, demand a realistic frame and remind us of the plight of such refugees subjected to the grim impacts of climate change. In *Gun Island*, Tipu and Rafi represent the sect of people who are becoming refugees in foreign lands due to their loss of interest in traditional way of livelihood affected by sea level rise, cyclones and increasing salinity of the freshwater in the Sunderbans. One character Nilima said, "the islands of the Sundarbans are constantly being swallowed up by the sea; they're disappearing before our eyes" (*Gun Island* 18). Every year the place gets hit by a severe storm that destroys everything and people are starved to death. So they try to find out someone who would help them out to move to other countries. The research will also take into consideration the hardships that natural disasters

and climate change present to woman victims as a result of their strong connections to and interactions with the natural world. Much remains to be learned regarding women's role in conservation of the environment and its ecosystem. Women's inherent capability to protect, nurture and sustain nature also exposes them to the atrocities of climate disasters. Experiences narrated by the woman protagonists are valid accounts of misery that provide the hints to re-evaluate the policies by governmental organizations on climate disaster management. Considering the significant challenges that climate change poses to woman victims around the world, it's essential to pay attention to their cry for innovative mitigation strategies and representation in global policy making during the post-calamity period. Climate change affects a wide range of people, especially those who are most vulnerable due to their geographical location and lack of resources, information and protection. Connection between climatic events and mental disorder has introduced new terms like ecoanxiety, ecological grief, solastalgia etc. The repercussions of climate events that are particularly severe or last for an extended period of time may have a delayed impact, leading to conditions such as post-traumatic stress disorder, or even be passed down to succeeding generations. Some of the texts selected for this study show that the survivors witness trauma, fear and anxiety due to ignorance and a deep sense of loss. This universal witnessing is multi-dimensional as it interweaves past personal and cultural history, present catastrophic experiences and probability of a severely damaged future. When it comes to climate fictions, there is no greater way to examine the character of humanity than through examining how people respond to catastrophic conditions.

The focus of this research is also in decoding how South Asian novels depict both the local and the global issues by narrating stories that create an ever-lasting impression on the minds of the readers. For the purpose of my research the novels that I have selected so far are:

Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* (2004) and *Gun Island* (2019), Romesh Gunesekera's *Reef* (1998), Arif Anwar's *The Storm* (2018), Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* (2002), Shubhangi Swarup's *Latitudes of Longing* (2018), Minoli Salgado's *A Little Dust on the Eyes* (2014), Uzma Aslam Khan's *Trespassing* (2003). The limited number of titles covered for this research, are crucial, as they give ample scope to critically define a subject that is still developing into a full-fledged literary genre, thus laying the foundation for future studies that, necessarily, will have to deal with a larger and more diversified body of work.

Review of Literature:

Climate change, as a component of setting or plot, occurs in the cli-fi novels as individual or collective responses that affect traditional, psychological, emotional, physical, and political experience and relates directly or indirectly to readers' lives. It seems to occupy a critical locus within this nature/culture relationship. The issue of climate change has been extensively researched on and employed worldwide by scientists, writers, critics, and activists in the light of current conditions. According to Global Climate Risk Index 2020 released by Germanwatch on December 4, 2019, India is the fifth most climate-affected country and also recorded the highest number of fatalities due to climate change in 2018. Furthermore, it demonstrates that South Asia is one of the severely vulnerable regions to the effects of climate change from a geographical, socio-demographic, and economic perspective. Although the region may have been endowed with huge productive lands, desirable monsoon, great rivers, enormous mangrove forests, and tropical zones, as a result of its geographical location, the area is extremely vulnerable to a large number of natural disasters. Tidal surges, deluges, storms, and cyclones frequently affect the low land areas of the region, especially Bangladesh and Indian states. In terms of casualty, the region has also been marked as the worst sufferer. Powerful gales, salt water intrusion into agriculture lands, and tidal currents pose a serious threat to the ecological systems of the Sundarbans and coastal districts. Sri Lanka was affected by severe monsoon rains in May 2018 affecting almost 20 districts. The assessment provided through Global Climate Risk Index 2020 highlights the existing vulnerabilities that may increase extreme events. Mostly affected people are from those areas where no mitigation strategies are taken in time to fight the impending disaster. Climate driven refugees move to new territories to confront new patterns of living. In such cases, a new climate condition affects their livelihood, especially if they belong to the lower class. The UN Refugee Agency, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) observes that internally displaced people or IDPs, refugees and stateless people are at the forefront of the climate crisis. In many cases, people are living in "climate hotspots" where they do not possess resources to adjust to an unsuitable climate. As a result of the effects of climate change, many refugees and others have been displaced, and the UNHCR is working to help them rebuild their lives and better prepare for prospective disasters. In December 2018, the UN General Assembly overwhelmingly endorsed the Global Compact on Refugees, which directly addressed this contemporary issue. It argues that "climate, environmental degradation and disasters increasingly interact with the drivers of refugee movement". According to a study that was conducted jointly by the organizations non-profits ActionAid

International and Climate Action Network South Asia (CANSA), there were nearly 18 million climate refugees in South Asia by the end of the year 2020. Nation-states, which perceive themselves to be in danger as a result of the movement of large numbers of people into their territory, find it justifiable to inflict violence on refugees, which in turn causes social unrest. Lava Asaad (2020) writes:

> "Globalizers often view refugees, despite their small number, as a threat to purity of the nation-state, or even its demise. Once again, this is an incident of nationalistic tendencies, which also play on the chord that the nation-state is pure and unified against the alien presence of immigrants" (Asaad 25).

Suffering during the journey to a different country, has remained the prime narrative element for the migration stories whereas the need for protection and rights is hardly foregrounded. According to A. Heslin et al. (2019), Wennersten and Robbins (2017), and M. D. Sarkar (2022), people's mobility is influenced by environmental factors such as coastal erosion, cyclonic storms, sea-level rise, rising temperature, salt water intrusion, more intense rainfall, desertification and deforestation that play as divers of climate migration. Refugees no longer gain a secure livelihood in their traditional homelands because 'climatic hot spots' have already started experiencing gruesome hazards that jeopardize their living or seriously affect their quality of life.

In the work titled "Fictional Depictions of Climate Change" (2014), Dr Danielle Clode and Monika Stasiak have presented a historical overview on the development of western climate fictions from early nineteenth century to present. They have discussed about a literary review where it is mentioned that as climate change has moved from a primary scientific concern to a broader political and cultural issue, the author's fictional representations have also moved from the genre of speculative science fictions to a broader range of contemporary climate fictions.

As Dipesh Chakrabarty contends in his essay *The Climate of History: Four Theses* (2009), the history of man's relationship to the environment is timeless because of the slow pace of environmental change. Gradual changes in climate can sometimes also "reach a tipping point at which this slow and apparently timeless backdrop for human actions transforms itself with a speed that can only spell disaster for human beings" (Chakrabarty 205). Without historical understanding of the climate change mechanism, we tend to experience only specific effects but not the global impact as a whole. As a glocal factor, collective human and non-human experience interweaves humankind's past, present and future drawing on "a shared sense of a catastrophe" (Chakrabarty 222). South Asian

narratives about hitherto neglected climate possibilities spur the readers' imagination allowing them to establish a chronology of their interaction with the non-human forces.

When the critical works regarding climate change fiction in South Asian context are considered, Amitav Ghosh's insight on the subject have to be taken into account. His book *The Great Derangement*: *Climate Change and the Unthinkable* (2016) shows that the consequences of global warming are so extreme that contemporary fiction must address the existing threats of sea level rise, extreme weather conditions, and mass migration. The book represents specific Asian perspective and an important voice from Asia. When it comes to the realms of history, politics and literature, Ghosh investigates that the current generation of writers has not been able to grapple with the inevitability of climate change. He explores the factors that contribute to the writers' inability to come up with imaginative responses to the threat of global warming and climate change. To overcome this imaginative failure present era requires novels "set in a time that is recognizable as our own, and they both communicate, with remarkable vividness, the uncanniness and improbability, the magnitude and interconnectedness of the transformations that are now under way" (Ghosh 98). According to Ghosh, the "derangement" from the universal experience requires a shift from "accustomed logocentrism" to collective mediation. In the Preface of the book *Waking the Giant* (2012), Bill McGuire states "before 26 December 2004, natural disasters were things that happened to other people in lands far away; after that seminal day, we were all suddenly more aware of our fragility, both as individuals and as part of a global society, and of our vulnerability to Nature's heartless and random culling" (McGuire vii). He further adds "Clearly, at a time in Earth history when sea levels are high and certain to climb higher,… it is useful to know how effective submarine landslides might be at generating tsunamis" (McGuire 233).

The authors not only create a fictional setting to convey a cautionary message to the readers, but also play a significant role in suggesting the need for feasible mitigation strategies. After entering the era of Anthropocene, climate change narratives offer striking metaphors for evolutionary processes, pollution and nuclear wars. Adam Trexler (2015) argues, in the context of climate change, flood stories bring in new significance, indicating a global issue that can be traced back to human activity (Trexler 83). In the Anthropocene era, we must learn to put up with things that are out of our control. Anthropocene as a notion intrigues Timothy Clark because of his interpretation of it as a "scale of effects" and a threshold for the humanities, particularly literary criticism. Clark in his book *Ecocriticism on the Edge* (2015) calls for a fundamental shift in environmental criticism, moving beyond traditional cognitive practices "contextual, historical or cultural" that "gave its own

procedures and objects relative separateness and coherence" (Clark 197). There is a chance of a space for human agency in "an epoch of humanity as the just and responsible steward of the earth" only if the "emergent nature of scale effects" breaks the cognitive control of cultural representation as the agent (Clark 198). On the basis of Clark's elaboration, "scale effect" is important in characterising the equation between the Anthropocene and ecocriticism. So, Anthony Carrigan (2015) calls for a need to "address not just the agents of 'natural' disasters (e.g. environmental phenomena such as hurricanes, earthquakes, and droughts), but also the social, political, and economic processes that put particular groups at risk and underpin the scale of disasters" (Carrigan 120). Human actions are primarily responsible for the destruction of the natural world and huge depletion of resources in the Anthropocene. To put it another way, it is marked by humanity's dramatic rise to ecological and geological prominence that overshadows the great natural forces. So, now we consider the emergence of the Anthropocene "a new geological era, one in which humans act as a main determinant of the environment of the planet" (Chakrabarty 209). Dipesh Chakrabarty (2009) further elaborates that the implications can only be grasped if people are seen as a part of the history of life on the earth at large.

Representation of poor and marginalized people in climate fictions provides the genre a unique way of attracting reader's imagination towards the immediate need of mitigation policies. Climate refugees migrate to an alien land where they fail to continue with their cultural and traditional practices. Poor marginalized farmers of a country lose their habits of farming in a traditional way because their new habitat is unsuitable for such practice. Amitav Ghosh, in *The Great Derangement* (2016) calls our present moment as the era of Great Derangement. According to Ghosh:

> "Climate change has reversed the temporal order of modernity: those on the margins are now the first to experience the future that awaits all of us; it is they who confront most directly… Nor is it any longer possible to exclude this dynamic even from places that were once renowned for their distinctiveness" (Ghosh 84).

With the growing need of consciousness about climate related issues, present day fictions bring into consideration the struggle for survival of the human and non-human species. The growing network of literary fictions on climate change asserts that the probability of extreme weather conditions make the real life experiences of the climate victims socially and culturally meaningful.

Research Aims and Objectives:

The present study aims to explore some select novels by South Asian writers from the perspective of interdisciplinary climatological discourses. The research seeks to analyze how specific fictions from South Asia deal with the global theme of climate crisis and their implications or effects on contemporary human society and culture. So, the study will not just be an attempt to analyze select texts as merely rendering of plots and characters facing climate hazards, rather it will delve deep into the socio-cultural and psychological aspects of the crisis. The research has the following objectives:

i) To explore how and to what extent the climate change motif has been employed by the South-Asian writers.

ii) To make a comparative analysis of varied range of fictions dealing with the global theme of climate change by different South-Asian novelists.

iii) To examine if South-Asian writers, through their literary endeavours, have been succeeded to provide any alternative view of the global climate issues by identifying new implications of these changes on human and non-human world.

iv) To consider the extent to which the methods and tools, that are currently employed, are adequate in generating new ideas.

v) To analyse how climate fictions depict the complex mechanisms of human psyche affected by the terror of climate disasters.

vi) To explore how woman victims confront natural calamity and what role they can play by taking part in governmental policy making.

However, the present study entitled *Climate Change and Anthropocene: Reading Environmental Catastrophe in Select Fictions from South Asia* intends to restrict its focus only to select works by specific authors.

Research Methodology:

The methodology is based on comparative analysis of select South-Asian fictions. The research would be conducted by close reading of primary texts as well as available secondary sources. Contemporary literary and critical theories will be employed to draw a valid conclusion about how far such works of art are relevant for spreading awareness among socially backward and marginalized people of developing countries. The primary conceptual

framework of this thesis lies in the theoretical insights of climatology, ecology and other environmental discourses. The works of critical writers and thinkers have shown distinct methods to approach various literary theories to be incorporated in the thesis. The non-fictional writings of Adam Trexler, Timothy Morton, Amitav Ghosh, Dipesh Chakraborty etc. provide the base for further critical analysis in this field of study. Apart from socio-cultural theories, this study draws on other fields of literary criticism like trauma theory. Cathy Caruth, Ruth Leys, Roger Luckhurst, E. Ann Kaplan are some of the critical thinkers whose significant works can be employed in the course of study. The accounts of the climate victims give impetus to the formation of a well-knit literary discourse. Application of theories from various fields of literary criticism like ecological theories, memory studies, and disaster studies will be incorporated in this research.

Relevance of the Study:

Recent studies on climate fictions show that this burgeoning genre provides ample scope for the researchers to acknowledge the growing need of such fictions in the field of scholarly activities or critical analysis. My aim in choosing this topic is to accentuate such novels' potentiality which makes them significant due to the scope they offer. Author's innovative way of representation can transport the readers to the actual 21st century moments. After reading specific novels from South-Asian literary corpus, I have found that in these fictions some of the authors have dealt with the theme of climate change covertly. When we inter-mingle a conventional critical approach with a dynamic interdisciplinary subject, we can notice that these stories deserve far closer attention than they are usually getting. In the scholarly articles written about these novels, the theme of climate change has been employed at the periphery whereas characters and plots have been given more importance. Historical records can be enhanced using accounts of a victim of ecodisaster, allowing present day scientists to better estimate the risks involved. Even though climate change is a growing concern in South Asia, scholarly researches have paid scant attention to the themes of contemporary natural hazardous events that appear frequently in fictions. Through the act of reading, readers can be engaged in both entertaining themselves with a well-knit story and also grasping the idea of the damage caused by catastrophic events. This study has been taken up with a hope that the thesis will enrich the existing body of knowledge through a comparative study of select South-Asian fictions. The main purpose of this thesis will be to update the present body of scientific investigation regarding environmental studies and the

effects of reading fictions on readers. Fictions, especially South-Asian novels, can also play an important role in shaping a unique genre of fiction bearing global values.

Chapterisation:

The proposed research project has the following tentative chapters that might be modified in course of research.

Chapter I: Introduction: An Overview of South Asian Climate Fictions

Chapter II: Climate Change and the Idea of Transforming Nations in Select South Asian Fictions

Chapter III: Dislocation and Dissociation: The Crisis of Climate Migrants and Refugees in Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* and *Gun Island*

Chapter IV: Micro-narratives of Environmental Catastrophe: Redefining Experiences of Woman Victims in Select South Asian Fictions

Chapter V: "Climate Trauma": Global Planetary Experience of Climate Change in the Novels of Amitav Ghosh, Minoli Salgado, Uzma Aslam Khan and Shubhangi Swarup

Chapter VI: Conclusion

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